

**Letters Received by Headquarters
District of New Mexico
September 1865-August 1890**



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1821-1920

Record Group 393

LETTERS RECEIVED BY HEADQUARTERS
DISTRICT OF NEW MEXICO
SEPTEMBER 1865-AUGUST 1890

On the 65 rolls of this microfilm publication are reproduced the letters received by Headquarters, District of New Mexico, September 1865 to August 1890. These letters are part of Records of United States Army Continental Commands, 1821-1920, Record Group 393.

Chronology

After the Civil War the U.S. Army reorganized its command structure in order to redistribute its diminished forces. War Department General Order 118, dated June 27, 1865, divided the United States geographically into five military divisions, which, in turn, were subdivided into a total of 19 departments, and each department was subdivided into many districts. Order 118 placed the Territory of New Mexico within the jurisdiction of the Department of California. Although Department of California General Order 1, dated June 27, 1865, established the District of New Mexico, the District Headquarters at Santa Fe did not officially supersede the Department of New Mexico until September 12, 1865, with the issuance of District of New Mexico General Order 1.

The District of New Mexico operated under three departments between its establishment in 1865 and its abolition in 1890. From September 12 to October 7, 1865, the District was under the Department of California. On the latter date, the District was transferred to the Department of the Missouri (War Dept. Gen. Order 142, dated Oct. 7, 1865). On November 30, 1885, it was transferred temporarily to the Department of Arizona, a transfer made permanent on May 5, 1886 (by Hq. of the Army Gen. Orders 121 and 25 of the dates mentioned, respectively). The District remained under the Department of Arizona until its abolition on August 8, 1890 (Hq. of the Army Gen. Order 84 of that date).

Narrative History

During its 25 years of existence, the District's primary responsibilities were protecting white immigrants and settlements from the Indians, guarding railroad construction, policing the border, and generally maintaining order in the Territory. Bvt. Maj. Gen. James H. Carleton, who had successfully maintained U.S. authority over the area during the Civil War, was given command of the District of New Mexico in 1865. In 1881 Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie, a veteran of frontier warfare, was made commander of the District of New Mexico.

Throughout this period, the District Command was occupied with subduing the Indians, who considered the entire Southwest one large battlefield. The Apaches, Navajos, Utes, and other tribes in the District began to react violently to pressures from the growing white population and to the Federal Government's efforts to confine them to reservations. They frequently raided ranches, outlying settlements, and mail coaches with devastating effect. The campaign against Indian depredations during the late 1860's was seriously handicapped by the discharge of the Volunteer troops who had become seasoned Indian fighters under the leadership of Carleton and Kit Carson. The Regular Army troops who replaced the Volunteers lacked experience in Indian warfare and this lack greatly reduced their combat effectiveness. Scouts and expeditions in pursuit of Indians during this transition period were largely unsuccessful--from 1865 to 1868 there were 33 engagements resulting in relatively few fatalities.

In the neighboring Territory of Arizona, the new commander Brig. Gen. George C. Crook, who assumed command in 1872, began a series of aggressive campaigns that made effective use of Indian scouts and regained the initiative against the Apaches. Although many Indians reported to the reservations, large-scale Indian raids were still frequent. In 1883 a large Indian raid prompted Gen. William T. Sherman, Commanding General of the Army, to order Crook to pursue and destroy the hostiles without regard to national or departmental boundaries. As a result Crook and Mackenzie coordinated their operations and subdued large bands of hostile Apaches. Brig. Gen. Nelson A. Miles, who assumed command of the Department of Arizona in 1886, continued the running battle. When Geronimo and his band were compelled to surrender on November 4, 1886, by Capt. Henry W. Lawton's 4th U.S. Cavalry, the last major Indian threat in the Territory of New Mexico was removed.

During the late 1860's and the 1870's, detachments from the District of New Mexico also were stationed along the border with Mexico, a region infested with bandits from both countries. Indians, taking advantage of the terrain, moved freely across the border, committing depredations in both the United States and Mexico. The fight against the border outlaws and renegade Indians was conducted from Forts Bayard, Cummings, and Selden, garrisoned in part by black soldiers of the 125th U.S. Colored Troops and the 9th U.S. Cavalry.

Indians and border outlaws were not the District's only problems. An atmosphere of lawlessness pervaded many white settlements in the Territory. Citizens occasionally took the law into their own hands to mete out justice and punish the Indians, often with tragic results. In 1878 two rival groups of ranchers and businessmen fought a bloody campaign known in history as the Lincoln County wars. At the request of the Territorial Governor, the Army was frequently called

in to restore order and assist the legally constituted authorities. In 1889 the discovery of silver on the Navajo reservation plunged the Territory into turmoil once again. The Army helped to maintain peace by separating the white settlers, the Navajos, and the silver prospectors.

The disorder over silver was the District of New Mexico's last major mission. By the late 1880's, with this one exception, both civil and military authority were established, and the District could turn its attention to the more routine matters of garrison life.

Records Description

This publication reproduces the surviving retained letters received by the District Headquarters from its establishment to its abolition. The letters and enclosures here reproduced were received from higher headquarters, subordinate District units, other U.S. Army commands, District staff officers, and the Mexican Army. Letters from officers, enlisted men, private citizens, and Territorial and U.S. Government officials are also included.

Upon receipt, significant letters were, in accordance with the recordkeeping practice of the time, entered into a volume called a register and assigned an entry or file number. The arrangement of the registered letters in this publication corresponds to the order in which they were registered. For the period 1865-77, letters received were registered by year; thereunder alphabetically by the initial letter of the surname, post, or office of the correspondent; and thereunder numbered according to date of receipt. Note that the first letter filmed under the letter "A" for 1865 is not "1" as might be expected, but "178," the number reached on September 12. Letters received from 1878 to 1890 were registered and numbered in chronological order by date of receipt. All registers, 1865-90, provided space at each entry for the name, rank, and address of the correspondent, the date of the letter, a brief summary of its content, and some indication of its ultimate disposition.

Some of the incoming correspondence was not registered upon receipt. These unregistered letters have been filmed after the registered letters for the same year. Included among the unregistered correspondence are 10 special files or consolidations of correspondence relating to a single subject, written by one or two correspondents, or issued by a single source. These special files are described in the appendix.

In addition to the file numbers assigned by the District of New Mexico, other notations appear on the letters. For example, cross-references to related District of New Mexico correspondence frequently appear. As a letter was forwarded

along the chain of command, each office or officer receiving the letter was required to add an endorsement to it, signifying that its content had been read and indicating the response. Endorsements included recommendations, approvals, disapprovals, and (often) extended remarks. The cross-reference "E B" refers to the endorsement books, a separate record series within Record Group 393. The cross-reference "L B" refers to the letters sent books (also a separate record series) in which the replies to letters received may be found. In addition to these and other cross-reference marks, many of the letters received bear file numbers applied by other commands (e.g., the Adjutant General's Office and the Department of the Missouri).

The letters reproduced in this publication constitute an excellent source of information about the relations between the civilian authorities and the troops assigned to the District as well as the Army's involvement in the maintenance of order in the Territory. They relate to a wide variety of subjects but generally reflect the District's principal responsibilities and activities. The many reports of Indian attacks and appeals for help from citizens illustrate the magnitude of the Indian problem. Reports (many with maps) from troop commanders provide narrative accounts of scouts and expeditions across deserts and mountains in search of Indian raiding parties and their places of refuge. Field reports detail skirmishes with bands of Apaches, Navajos, and Utes. Still other reports contain a wealth of information about the life of the frontier soldier in and out of garrison, including his health, pay, and living conditions at the forts. Proceedings of courts-martial and boards of survey provide a record of the administration of military justice in the District. Reports of mapping expeditions and geographical surveys also appear in this correspondence. A complete list of the military activities mentioned in this series of records is not attempted here.

Related Records

Letters sent by the District of New Mexico, 1865-90, have been microfilmed by the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) on rolls 3-7 of *Letters Sent by the 9th Military Department, the Department of New Mexico, and the District of New Mexico, 1849-1890*, M1072. Also found in Records of United States Army Continental Commands, 1821-1920, Record Group 393, are additional records of the District of New Mexico including endorsements sent, 1867-90; telegrams sent, 1878-87; telegrams received, 1870-85; general orders issued, 1869-74; records of District staff officers; and similar series of records for the District's predecessor, the Department of New Mexico. Records of related military divisions, departments, and districts in Record Group 393 include the Department of Arizona, the Department of California, and the Department of the Missouri. Record Group 393 also contains the records of various posts, camps, and garrisons of the District of New Mexico.

In Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94, are reservation files and medical histories that relate to various posts, camps, and garrisons in the District of New Mexico. In addition, the following NARS microfilm publications from Record Group 94 include records relating to the District and Territory of New Mexico: *Returns From U.S. Military Posts, 1800-1916*, M617; *Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series), 1861-1870*, M619; *Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series), 1871-1880*, M666, and *Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series), 1881-1889*, M689.

The Quartermaster's consolidated correspondence file in Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Record Group 92, includes correspondence relating to the forts in the District of New Mexico. Post inspection reports are in Records of the Office of the Inspector General, Record Group 159. Records of Regular Army units serving in the District of New Mexico are part of Records of United States Regular Army Mobile Units, 1821-1942, Record Group 391.

This introduction and other editorial material were prepared by James C. Staubach. The editor was Annis K. Olsen.

APPENDIX

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Roll</u>
Oct.-Nov. 1871	Proposals for supplies	14
July-Dec. 1872	Letters from Capt. Robert P. Hughes, Judge Advocate, relating to courts-martial at Santa Fe, N. Mex.	16
1872-73	General Service Department, applications for employment and transfer	20
1880	Proceedings of boards of survey	41
Jan. 1881	Official copies of telegrams sent by Lt. Col. Nathan A. M. Dudley, Commanding Officer, 9th U.S. Cavalry	44
Jan.-June 1882	Correspondence relating to William H. H. Llewellyn, Indian Agent, and to operations against hostile Indians	48
June 1883	Correspondence sent and received by the 13th U.S. Infantry and 4th U.S. Cavalry in the field, Southwest New Mexico	52
1886	Descriptive lists and enlistment papers of Indian scouts at Fort Wingate, N. Mex.	61
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<u>Roll</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Letters Received File numbers</u>
1	Sept.-Dec. 1865	A178-W204
2	1866	A1-E57
3	1866	F3-M364
4	1866	Mc3-Z1
5	1867	A1-G12
6	1867	M10-O16
7	1867	P1-R65
8	1867	S1-T12
9	1867	U13-W78
10	1868	A1-U153
11	1869	A72-W24
	1870	C80-U86
12	1871	A5-L33
13	1871	M9-Q182
14	1871	R2-W64
15	1872	A2-L8
16	1872	M7-U71
17	1873	A2-L5
18	1873	M2-M645
19	1873	N1-P26
20	1873	Q1-Y29
21	1874	A2-L4
22	1874	M3-M719
23	1874	N2-Y2
24	1875	A1-L72
25	1875	M16-M692
26	1875	N3-W169
27	1876	A1-M790
28	1876	N18-W238
29	1877	A2-M599
30	1877	N10-S342
31	1877	T2-W253
32	Jan.-Apr. 1878	3-936
33	May-June 1878	958-1435
34	July-Aug. 1878	1437-2001
35	Sept.-Dec. 1878	2003-3387
36	Jan.-Mar. 1879	2-653
37	Apr.-June 1879	658-1658
38	July-Sept. 1879	1664-2491
39	Oct.-Dec. 1879	2506-3485
40	Jan.-June 1880	806-1790
41	July-Dec. 1880	2103-4519
42	Jan.-Apr. 1881	5-1544
43	May-Oct. 1881	1568-4364
44	Nov.-Dec. 1881	4368-5690
45	Jan.-Feb. 1882	1-1037
46	Mar.-Apr. 1882	1044-1895

<u>Roll</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Letters Received File numbers</u>
47	May-Sept. 1882	1906-3962
48	Oct.-Dec. 1882	3983-5172
49	Jan.-Mar. 1883	20-1035
50	Apr.-June 1883	1043-2290
51	July-Sept. 1883	2297-3398
52	Oct.-Dec. 1883	3399-4560
53	Jan.-Apr. 1884	1-1361
54	May-July 1884	1382-2672
55	Aug.-Dec. 1884	2686-4668
56	Jan.-June 1885	17-1956
57	July-Aug. 1885	1958-2793
58	Sept.-Oct. 1885	2818-3644
59	Nov.-Dec. 1885	3661-4130
60	Jan.-Mar. 1886	8-1106
61	Apr.-Dec. 1886	1117-3162
62	Jan.-June 1887	10-372
63	July-Dec. 1887	375-674
64	Jan.-Dec. 1888	33-366
65	Jan.-Dec. 1889	1-100
	Jan.-Aug. 1890	1-33